

THE BYSTANDER



Is There a Santa Claus?
Tale of Two Teeth Traveled Far.
The Beautiful Slush.
Union of the "Come Backs."

Is there a Santa Claus? That is the question that for the past few days has been seriously worrying the minds of a great many children, while the answer to it has been the cause of probably more worry to their parents. It is a question that comes up with each recurring Christmas as children pass from the age of frank and implicit belief to that of doubt, and the question faced by thousands of parents is whether to dissemble or explain, whether to attempt to force the doubt from their children's minds or take up the allegorical significance of good Old St. Nick and reconcile past explanations with new ones.

One mother passed through an interesting experience during the past week and is now dolefully wondering whether her efforts to increase the joys of her offspring have only resulted in implanting in his mind the seeds of doubt of all things. The thing that brought worry to her Christmas joy was an overheard remark:

"I found out all about this Santa Claus business; now I'm going to find out about the Jesus business," was what she listened to in horrified amazement. She is worrying now how to explain that all the fanciful Santa Claus stories of Christmases gone by were not lies intended to deceive.

It is invariably a shock to a mother to find her hopefuls graduating from the Santa Claus believing class, just as the transformation from curls to cropped polls, from knickerbockers to trousers, and from home to college—the things that bring intense joys to the children and youth—brings heartaches to the mothers, because her absolute dominion lessens with each stage of progress.

But, there is a Santa Claus. The man or the woman or the child who lives today and has not felt the presence of the genial heart-warmer the past week is the one who does not exist. Santa Claus has been beaming upon everyone, and if you have not seen him and felt his genial, wholesome presence, it is time you went into a corner for some self-dissection. You need a pill, or something.

Is there a Santa Claus? In the words of the poet: "You bet there is."

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It is now nearly two years since the Bystander first gave to an expectant world the story of Mayor Fern's and his grandmother's teeth, and already the story has become an American classic. Every newspaper of prominence from Medicine Hat to Tallahassee, Florida, republished the story in its Sunday supplement, during the early months of the spring, while one or two British journals copied it, scrupulously classifying it as "humor." Then the makers of "boiler plate" took it up, and all the weeklies from Maine to Oregon told their readers how Honolulu had a mayor, et cetera. Now, I notice, the bigger papers are rehashing it, the latest republication to reach Honolulu with the story being the Boston Post.

Next to the story told about Claus Spreckels' poker game with King Kalakaua, when five kings beat four aces, that concerning the first mayor of Honolulu has traveled farther and been printed oftener than any other that ever came out of the Islands. And, coming down to it, haven't we every reason to be thankful that Mayor Fern has those teeth which gave us so much publicity?

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It is to be hoped that every member of the new board of supervisors was on the streets last night and that no chuckhole member of the old board was. The hope regarding the new men is that they heard sufficient comment upon Honolulu business streets to fire each one with the determination to remedy the present disgraceful conditions, while the hope that the old members were not around when the general comments were flying is inspired by the Christmas idea that nobody's feelings should be hurt.

Whether Sam Dwight sticks and becomes chairman of the road committee, or whether Eben Low lands the job, let us hope that when Christmas rolls around again there will be less mud and less profanity, with greater comfort to those who had to sloop in the mud last night and listen to the profanity at the same time. Certainly last night's streets gave whatever tourists were around the impression that Honolulu was one jay town. Jim Quinn's Fort street block only emphasized the horror of the rest of it.

But, let us wipe the mud from our shoes and the memory of the old supervisors from our mind. Better times and cleaner streets are coming.

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News that Walter G. Smith is on the back trail has inspired a lusty idea, that of the formation of a "Come Back Club," of which Walter G. is to be requested to be first president and patron, with his old college chum, G. P. Thielens, as understudy. Those eligible to join will be the ones who have said their last fond farewells to Honolulu, worn away the leis of sorrowing friends and fed them to the fish off the bell buoy, gazed long and lingeringly on the fast-receding view of Koko Head, sought their fortunes out in the busy world, and then finally decided that after all there is no place like good, old Honolulu, and have winged their way home. These are the ones who have shown the gleeful world that they can "come back."

The club should have a wide membership. The first to join should be Eddie Douthitt, because he struck out on the oriental track and made his "come back" rapidly. Lorrin Andrews swung through a few times across the Pacific before he got back into place. J. W. W. Brewster will qualify as a repeater, coming back being a habit with him. Another come back is Milverton, who traveled abroad between government jobs.

W. B. Oleson will be asked to counteract the presence of so many attorneys in the club, and Pete Baron will be official reconstructor for the other members. There are a few in the near-come-back class, who might be permitted to pay dues. George Henshall is a sample, and it all depends upon whether going to Hilo is really an exile or an error. Jack Atkinson is another. Between his New York lamp-post beguiler, his warpath in Siberia, his mental flights and other absences, he may be looked upon as a "come back."

And there are only a few of the many who have gone away hopefully and returned more hopeful than ever. Long may they wave!

DIDN'T KNOW MUCH.

"How do you like your teacher, dear?" little Mary was asked, after her first day at school.

"I like her real well," said Mary, "but I don't think she knows much, for she just keeps asking questions all the time."

HEREDITY.

Knicker—Whom does the baby resemble?
Docker—His yall takes after its father's college.

SUFFICIENT REASON.

"Don't you admire the old-time melody?"
"No, I'm a fresh-air kind."

SIDELIGHTS

A CHRISTMAS HOMILY.

Even before the days of Julius Caesar had Christmas been celebrated. Of course, the man who became famous by being the happy possessor of a wife who was beyond reproach—as all wives are—lived before Santa Claus was born and artificial whiskers for Salvation Army under studies were invented. And perhaps the occasion for the celebration was the anniversary of the cackling of the geese which save Rome, and celebrated by the roasting of that fowl instead of cold storage turkeys. And maybe the day was not denominated "Christmas," but boasted of a title, a portion of which was the absolutely incomprehensible word "idea."

And as the centuries rolled along still was Christmas celebrated. The old Peruvians, prior to the time when Pizarro, "with force of arms," convinced them that the Jonah story was true, and that the bakers used ovens covering acres of ground, and that a whale was a "small" fish, had an Xmas day. It arrived on June 21st, the longest day of the year, and the entire population gathered on a great plain, to welcome with a mighty shout the rising of the sun. The Indians traversed, in imagination, the Happy Hunting Grounds yearly long before Bill Penn, the founder of the Keystone State, bought their possessions for less dollars than the Republican gamblers contributed to the Malihini Christmas Tree. When John Baker's twin brother, Kamehameha the First, was an infant in short or no pantaloons, the Hawaiians celebrated a Christmas. Presents were not given until the missionaries introduced the habit amongst the aborigines, but there was a yearly celebration.

Indeed, you may search all of the histories in Mark Robinson's library and fail to find, even way back to the days of Babylon and Assyria, a people who didn't preach, at least once a year, even as the host of angels sang, "On earth peace, good will toward men." In some of the volumes you might learn that the lesson was taught with the aid of an axe, but taught it was. Sidelights trusts that The Advertiser will this morning teach the lesson not only in well-rounded phrase, but by practical suggestion. I saw one of those funny eclair cables a few weeks ago. I looked it up in the code and found that it was an appeal to keep Cottrell out and await the arrival of the Delegate in Washington. The first two words were "Blackmail Cottrell;" the last two, save the signature, "Blissfully Cupid." The economical code book says that "blackmail" means "oppose strongly appointment of," and "blissfully" stands for "desirable to await arrival of."

"On earth peace, good will toward men." Let us determine to welcome Cottrell when he comes, remembering in our present charitable mood that he is responsible neither for his descent nor for the fact that he comes from Ohio.

"On earth peace, good will toward men." Let Mayor Fern and the newly-elected board of supervisors, during the coming week, hold a luan, and agree that necessity for vetoes shall no longer exist. Let Nigel Jackson's bunch, on tomorrow night, wear pillows for gloves, and exchange love taps, thereby setting a splendid example for contestants in the impending fight for political power between the Governor and the Delegate. Let us forget the whiskers, hookworms and cost of the Russians, and honestly endeavor to discover some good in them, even though now satisfied that our efforts will be unavailing; and may the same charitable forgetful mood blot out entirely from our odorous recollection both Korean and Hindu.

"On earth peace, good will toward men." Let us take in the Christmas tree, and watch the finest, grandest sight of the myriad of fine, grand sights which the Founder of the Universe has provided for His creatures—a host of children with their faces aglow with pleasure. It doesn't matter much if it rains, although I do not believe it will, for sunlight, glorious sunlight, will still be there. It doesn't matter much if the dolls are cheap, although I do not believe they will be, for the spirit which reformed Old Scrooge and made Tiny Tim happy is still alive, and will render them beautiful. It doesn't matter if the tin horns wear out in an hour, although I don't believe they will, for their music will ever be sweeter than any symphony composed by Chopin. Fred Waldron's oranges may be sour, although I don't believe they will be, but good old Santa Claus will wave his magic wand, and transform acidity into honey. The candy may be of the push-art quality, although I don't believe it will be, but even if it is, the Master will take care that the love of the youngsters which prompted its giving provides the necessary leaven.

A crude homily, but I can not help it, having a boy of my own.

"On earth peace, good will toward men."

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JAPS AND JEWELRY.

My boy and I went into a fashionable jewelry shop the other evening to purchase the cheapest Shrine button we could find as a Christmas present for our respective father and husband. While regretting the fact that choice of a husband compelled me to make choice of a button, yet was my master's money well spent. For, to quote a remark which I have heard the gamblers who occasionally congregate at my house use, I "passed the buck" up to our son and heir, and looked around the room.

And if you really desire to get even on the thirty-three and a third per cent. profit which any self-respecting haole jeweler would consider it a disgrace not to charge, make your purchase when some Japs are engaged in similar exploits. Just, for instance, watch him buy a necktie pin. He nearly always brings an advisory committee with him, and the convention takes longer to organize, adopt resolutions and adjourn than do even we when buying a new dress. The price is first discussed. Then the pin is weighed in the hand. Then it is fitted in the scarf and the prospective purchaser looks at himself in a mirror to see how much his appearance is improved. Then a caucus is held. After due deliberation a second and a third and a fourth pin comes up for inspection. Shapes and forms and material all enter into the discussion. And when the decision is finally made, the committee on ways and means makes a report. But the money is not paid until careful scrutiny is given to the packing of the ornament. Not until the salesman hunts up his cotton and puts it in the bottom of one of those boxes so artfully constructed that they appear to contain gems of priceless worth, the duly elected jewel placed lovingly on its downy couch and then covered with the pasteboard lid, and the cradle covered with beautiful tissue paper and tied up with a rubber band and laid on the counter, is liquidation made. The convention adjourns and everybody is happy.

The outfit I saw on the night aforesaid finally decided on an Elks' pin, carefully measuring up the length of the antlers and choosing the one with the longest. I hope they got their money's worth. I certainly did mine. In conclusion it may be noted that the Japs were not kimono clad.

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AS OTHERS SEE US.

Don't rely too much for information concerning Hawaii on what you see and know and read in our own newspapers. You may look at things through prejudiced eyes, and conditions which from personal observation you believe exist, may in reality be somewhat different. The Apple Butter Garden Island, and the Baldwin Maui News, and the Kennedy-Scott Hilo publications, and even The Advertiser, and the rest of the great newspapers of the Territory do not always adhere strictly to fact. The prayer of Bobby Burns that we might see ourselves as others see us, is one which we need not make in vain. You can get more answers to it than Treasurer Bob Shingle can to a request for applications for subordinate offices.

Way down in Louisiana there is a newspaper published by a fellow named Loubet. He knows all about us. Way up in North Dakota there is a newspaper published by a fellow name Peterson. He, too, knows all about us. In the little coterie of States formerly owned by Aldrich, Lodge & Co., and whose principal productions are codfish, high tariff principles and missionaries, any newspaper from which we might not learn something about ourselves would be compelled to go out of business. Staid old Philadelphia has at last learned that we are on the map, and, through its seven-day late dailies, is informing the Quakers who and what we are. Roosevelt's late possession, New York, permits few sons to set without enlightenment concerning us.

Just one gem from the vast mass of information. Perhaps I shall in the future take advantage of my prerogative to use seasons, and quote some others. This one comes from the columns of a little one-horse "weekly" of the Middle West, whose ledger account unquestionably shows that its limited list of subscribers is short in cash and long on farm produce. The paper is, insofar as we are concerned, truthfully called "Courier." Here is the jewel:

In Honolulu, on the Sandwich Islands, has recently been established calling days. The natives, it is said, appear to like the custom. Their calling cards are queer looking things, the names being printed on bright scarlet paper. The village is divided into sections, each division having one day to itself. On Sunday they meet to a place near the sea and make arrangements for social precedence. A correspondent of the editor who recently visited there tells us that there is much rivalry on this question, but that the lay girls unquestionably rank first.

Boat riding is one of the favorite pastimes of the people. Many of

the natives are so expert that they can harpoon a shark from a board. While engaged in the sport they wear nothing but tea leaves, which is a plant growing wild in the islands, and from which a favorite native drink, called wholekew, is manufactured. And much more interesting, instructive and novel information doth ye editor of the "Courier" hand out. Subscribe for a year by sending him a bunch of bananas or a couple of pineapples and enjoy rhetorical, grammatical and philosophical dissertations on life in Hawaii. Your fruit will be well spent.

GET HUNGRY.

A visit to any of the leading cafes of Honolulu after the theater always pays. Sometimes it does more, and value received does not appear on the cash register and is not paid for by you. You pay, of course, for the Weiss rarebit or the lobster a la Newburg, but the part of the feast which causes not indigestion and nightmare, and appeases not the physical but the mental appetite, is not charged for.

Saturday, as far as school is concerned, is what the lawyers call "die non juridicus." Pressed out it means there is nothing doing on that day. Wherefore doth my boy welcome its arrival, because a B-minus school report under the head "deportment" need not be feared, and because he may stay up late on its eve, and occasionally take in the theater. For ever has it been my theory that the beauty sleep plan will not be marred as to the kiddies if once a week, when they don't have to get up early the next morning, they are permitted to stay up late the previous night.

And once in a while, after seeing the villain properly and thoroughly killed, and the hero emerge triumphantly from all of his trials and tribulations, tenderly holding the sweet heroine in his arms, we get thankful and hungry at the same time, and visit one of the cafes.

And here may much be seen by one of keen eyesight and an observing mind. About one of the tables you may see a party of men, ostensibly gathered together for the sake of good fellowship, and at intervals noisily proclaiming that fact. Listen and watch and deduce. The good fellowship is there, but you will probably find there is also a political deal, or the promotion of a ditch deal, or a street paving deal, or a steamship agency deal, or some other kind of a deal on, which, if successful, will mean power or honor or simoleons to the eaters.

Do you see a couple in the corner? They are purposely too far away from you to have their conversation overheard. But watch them, and then watch the long columns of society news for announcements of engagements. Should you see their names mentioned in the same paragraph you may say to a friend less observant "I told you so."

Pop! You look around, and see a merry party of merry tourists. Fin water is theirs because they like it and because they can afford to buy it. The class of Secretary Wood's recruits who visit the theaters and cafes like Honolulu too, and indeed not a few of them can likewise afford to buy it. As a rule they turn out to be a jolly lot and a goodnatured lot. Dodging automobiles, and making other people dodge automobiles, and being compelled to listen to the aftermath of politics, and being interviewed by reporters and seeing the statue worshiper, and listening to a lungy (a new word) and enlightening exposition of the habens corpus section of the Constitution by Claudius John Marshall McBride—these and many similar experiences may you learn are to them positive pleasures.

Occasionally, may you run across a lot who are convivially determining the exact manner in which the Elks' carnival is to be conducted, or no less convivially fixing up the program for the entertainment of a lot of shriners. You will hear at these tables expressions like "Exalted" and "Indian" and "Imperial" and "Fred" and "Sunny Jim" and "Thompson." To the casual, nonthinking listener they mean nothing, and sound as disconnected as a Kaniho speech, but in reality they signify that the month of February and the Floral Parade will be epoch-making marks in the history of Hawaii.

The last time—Friday night—I indulged in the recreation to which I have made reference, the waiter looked somewhat doubtfully at a pair who ordered something they called a ham-and-egg sandwich, prefaced by another order of something they called a "gin fizz." If I spell the latter wrong it is not my fault. With all of my deductive powers I could not quite understand what was going on. Save as to features the pair looked respectable. Overlooking a few discrepancies in the matter of dress they looked respectable. "Never mind the cost" may have caused doubts, but they looked financially respectable just the same. But stray words, such as "forefeit," and "frame-up," and "in de fourth," and "per cent," and "box receipts" and many another phrase were unrecognizable to me until my husband informed me that Christmas comes on December 25 this year, and that on the evening following he would leave me alone to attend to the lighting of our tree in order to attend a prize fight legally called a boxing contest. My remembrance that the law and the gospel fixed December 26 as the day had no effect whatever.

And plenty of other things of interest did I see and hear. To quote a favorite remark of mine, look it up for yourself.

Small Talks

CHINESE CONSUL—I wouldn't leave my little wooden hut for you.

IMMIGRATION COMMISSIONER KEEFE—I told you so. Just go and size up the last bunch of Filipinos that arrived. Hurrah for the Russians!

TERRITORIAL TREASURER CONKLING—The tax office is very much interested in the Mahuka site condemnation suits. It stands to win, no matter what the courts decide.

DOCTOR HAND—The next Malihini Tree I hope to see assisted by a corps of Boy Scouts. This year we haven't the uniforms, and without uniforms the boys are only boys.

SUPERVISOR MURRAY—I can tell you one thing about the new board: when we vote on something we are going to stick, because we are going to think before we act. How about Low? Oh, that's something different.

HON. DR. HUDDY—Kauai was satisfied with the business administration in the house last session, and will be satisfied to continue the same organization this session. The majority of the Oahu members seem to agree with us, too.

E. M. CHEATHAM—Truly the members of Central Union will be treated to a "pleasant" surprise this Christmas morning; certain piles of lumber lately hauled on to the vacant lot opposite on the mauka side of Beretania avenue have all the earmarks of being one of Charlie Frazier's rustic street decorations. By next Sunday, perhaps, they will be greeted with an artistic endeavor in the shape of a pelican swallowing a Rhino or with the advice to take "Somebody's Pale Pills for Pink People." Seriously, the very thought of having a billboard in the same block as the beautiful Central Union is abhorrent.

THAYER BOBS UP SERENELY AGAIN

Alleged Swindler Is Arrested in Hongkong, Charged With Crime There.

MANILA, November 29.—The Hongkong Telegraph, dated November 25, has the following article therein concerning the much discussed Alford Finlay Thayer, who left here some time ago for the China coast, leaving his financial affairs in this city in a rather chaotic condition:

"Alford Finlay Thayer, an American, was arrested at noon today on his arrival from Manila. He appeared before J. B. Wood, second police magistrate, this afternoon, charged by A. Davies, manager of the Hongkong Hotel, with issuing checks to the total amount of \$1,000, on the 24th of September last, by falsely representing that he had an account with the Hongkong and Shanghai Bank in Manila, where, in fact, he has no such account. "Inspector Hanson was in charge of

the case and the defendant was unrepresented.

"The case was remanded till tomorrow at twelve o'clock so as to enable the defendant to find bail. In the meanwhile, his worship ordered defendant to be detained in police custody."

INTERMARRIAGE.

RENO, December 24.—Tokawa, a Japanese, today married Miss Fredrick, a white girl. The marriage has excited a great deal of interest.

INTERESTING TO MOTHERS—HOW TO CURE COUGHS AND COLDS.

There is one subject which always interests the mothers of young children, and that is how to treat their coughs and colds, or to ward off a threatened attack of croup. For this purpose we can recommend Chamberlain's Cough Remedy. It always proves beneficial. In case of croup it should be given as soon as the coughing begins, and to prevent the attack. Keep it at hand ready for instant use. Many mothers do so, and it saves them much needless pain. For sale by all dealers, Bennett, Smith & Co., Ltd., Agents for Hawaii.

A Philadelphia who saw a child crushed by trolley car wheels has patented a feeder which may be dropped to the rails by a latch under the motor car's feet.